

**AREA FORM****AREA NAME:** OAK HILL AGRICULTURAL NEIGHBORHOOD

## 1. Type of Area Form

Town-wide: ☐Historic District: ☒Project Area: ☐2. Name of area: Oak Hill Agricultural  
Neighborhood

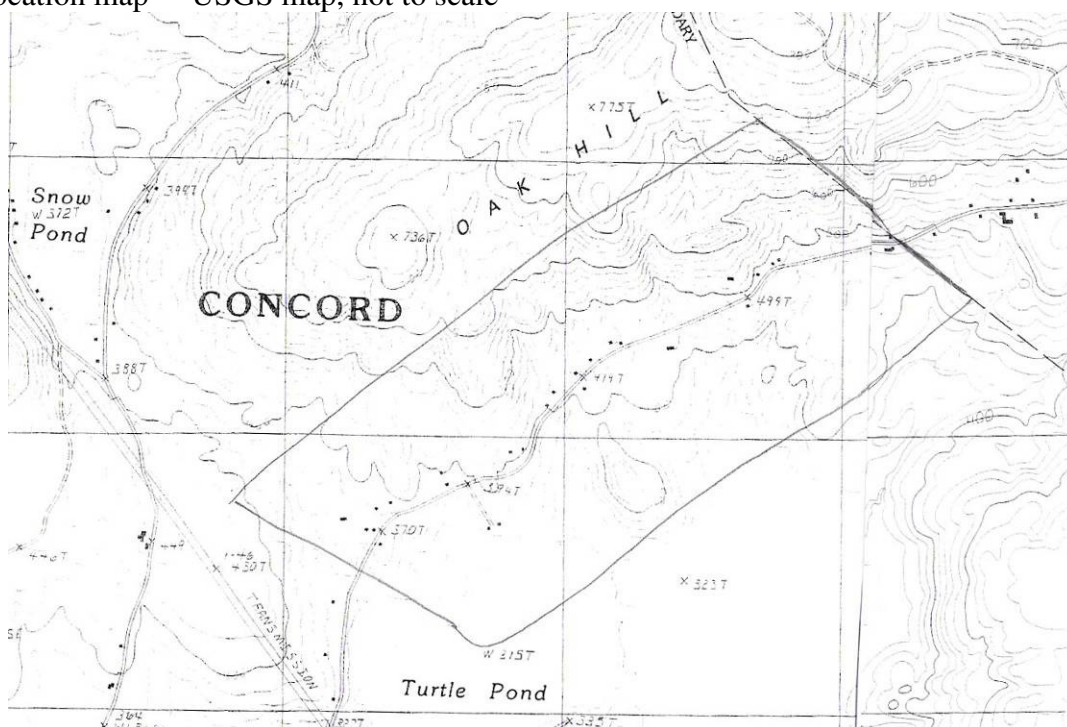
## 9. Inventory numbers in this area:

CON0179CON0180CON0181CON0182CON0183CON01843. Location: Oak Hill4. City or town: Concord5. County: Merrimack6. USGS quadrangle name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Penacook & Loudon7. USGS scale: 1:24000

## 8. UTM reference: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Setting: rural; roadside fields; 18<sup>th</sup> &  
19<sup>th</sup> c. farms interspersed with 20<sup>th</sup> c.  
\_\_\_\_\_11. Acreage: 600+ acres12. Preparer(s): Elizabeth Durfee Hengen,  
Preservation Consultant13. Organization: for Concord Heritage  
Commission

## 15. Location map - USGS map, not to scale

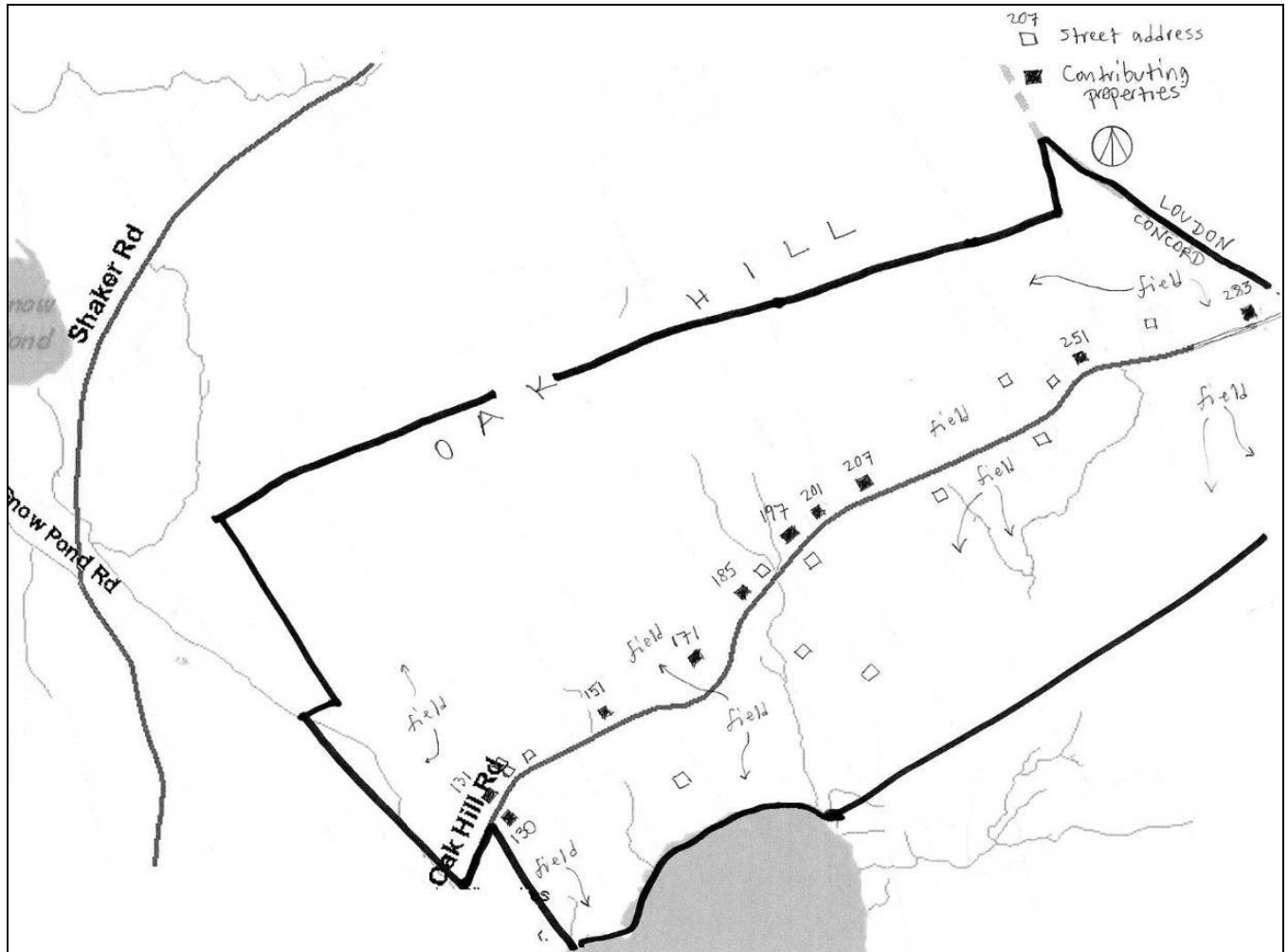




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15. Sketch map

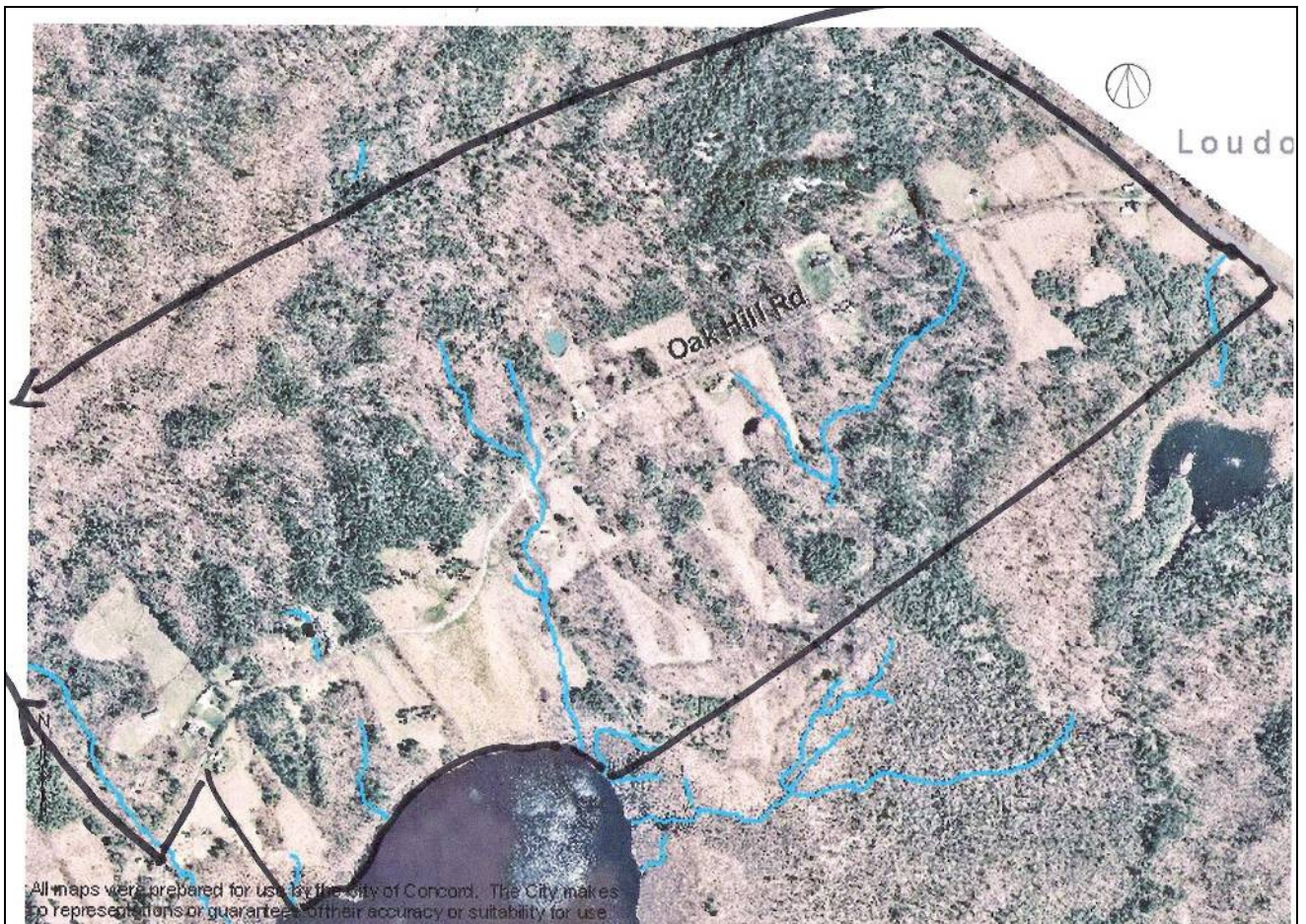




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Aerial view of Oak Hill Agricultural Neighborhood, showing land use patterns in 2006.





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This form was completed as part of a survey of rural agricultural properties within the City of Concord, a project sponsored by the Heritage Commission. The overall purpose of the project was to raise public awareness of the city's rich agricultural legacy through a combination of identification, education, public policy and preservation planning tools.

Due to limited resources, the survey focused on barns and outbuildings that met all of the following criteria: (1) were sited on at least 10 acres of land; (2) they were located in a fairly rural area and not within the city center or an outlying village; (3) the surrounding land retained historic landscape features, such as open fields, pasture, and stone walls; (4) the outbuildings retained a high level of integrity from their agricultural era. None of the barns on the St. Paul's School campus were included. In addition, a few landmark barns, even if on a small lot, were included. Approximately 45 properties were included in the survey. Whenever possible, an interior inspection of the buildings was undertaken.

The survey was conducted at the reconnaissance-level. Historic background information was acquired from questionnaires sent to each property owner, personal interviews, a review of historic maps, and limited research in local histories. Certainly, additional research data on farms is available from population and, in particular, agricultural census records, and owners are encouraged to pursue those to add to this data base.

When properties were part of a larger, agricultural district, the form locates them as such, and a separate form documenting that historic agricultural neighborhood was prepared.

**19. Historical Background**

This section of East Concord was almost entirely settled by members of the Potter family; in fact Oak Hill Road was once called Potter Road. In 1772, brothers Richard (1743-1828) and Ephraim Potter of Ipswich purchased a large tract of land from John Hoit, who had erected a log cabin, said to be near the shore of Turtle Pond, just below 171 Oak Hill Road, and lived there for a few years. Richard, with his wife Lydia (d. 1824) and infant son, immediately moved into the log house. Circa 1790, Richard replaced the cabin with a commodious 2 ½ story, 5x3 bay house, which stood nearly on the site of 171 Oak Hill Rd., high above the pond.<sup>1</sup> Ephraim settled here in 1777, following his marriage. He took the northeasterly section of the land originally purchased of Hoit, establishing a farm at 283 Oak Hill Rd.<sup>2</sup> Both of these properties remain in the Potter family today.

Over the years, Potter descendants established farms or resided at nearly every older house along Oak Hill Road, east of the transmission lines. They include 130 Oak Hill, 131 Oak Hill, 197 Oak Hill, 251 Oak and 283 Oak Hill. (More distant Potter relatives also resided on Appleton Street, across Turtle Pond.) Two additional farms, 201 and 207 Oak Hill, were settled by the Tenney family, who land from the Potters in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> c. All of the farms, with the exception of 130 Oak Hill, are on the north side of the road, reserving the south side for pasture or fields.

Dairying was the primary activity during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and into the 20<sup>th</sup> c. At least one farm (197 Oak Hill Rd.) had an extensive poultry operation in the 1920-early 1950s; sizeable chicken houses stood on other farms, as well. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, bricks were made in this area; among the local

<sup>1</sup> Miscellaneous papers in Potter family.

<sup>2</sup> Amsden: 13: 14.



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buildings constructed with them was the main administration building for the State Hospital (built 1842).<sup>3</sup>

This section of Concord was the first outlying area to get a district schoolhouse, erected in 1781. In addition to serving this neighborhood, it schooled nearby Loudon children. It was later replaced by a schoolhouse still standing (though now a residence) at 185 Oak Hill Road, built in 1887.



1892 map showing Oak Hill Agricultural Neighborhood

**20. Applicable NHDHR Historic Context(s)**

- 39. Brick making for local and regional markets, 1650-1920.
- 51. Mixed agriculture and the family farm, 1630-present.
- 56. Local-scale dairy farming, 1800-present.
- 64. Poultry farming, 1870-present.
- 105. Elementary and secondary education, 1770-present.

**21. Architectural Description and Comparative Evaluation**

The Oak Hill Agricultural Neighborhood encompasses both sides of Oak Hill Road, from a short distance north of where transmission lines cross the road to the Loudon town line. Much of the land slopes downward from Oak Hill to the north to Turtle Pond on the south side of the road. The district includes nine former or current farms that were established at least by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> c., and most of which retain historic outbuildings and extensive acreage, comprised of large fields, pasture, woods, stone walls, cellar holes and views southerly toward the pond. One of the pastures is still used to graze cows. Also within the district is a late 19<sup>th</sup> c. schoolhouse (since converted to a residence).

<sup>3</sup> Amsden: 13: 13.



**AREA FORM****AREA NAME:** OAK HILL AGRICULTURAL NEIGHBORHOODContributing properties within area:

**130 Oak Hill Road:** see CON0179

**131 Oak Hill Road:** see CON0180

**151 Oak Hill Road:** Early owners of this former farm include S. Kimball (1858) and Rowell (1892). Potter family papers suggest it dates to ca. 1800, but research and an interior inspection is needed to corroborate that. It is a 2½ story, 5x2-bay house has a center entrance and twin chimneys. The entrance has a bracketed door hood. A one-bay wing extends to the east and an ell to the rear. A short distance behind the ell stands a lengthy, detached gable-front barn.



151 Oak Hill Road. *Courtesy Regina Potter.*

**171 Oak Hill Road:** This is the site of the Richard Potter farmhouse, erected ca. 1790 and home of the original settlement in this area. At his death, his oldest son, Joseph P. (b. 1772), inherited the farm, in turn passing it onto his eldest son, Thomas Drake Potter (1796-1873). The farm became known as Oak Farm. In 1857, Thomas Drake sold the 100-acre farm to Joseph H. Potter for \$5,000. In 1889, Joseph, by then living in Ohio, sold it to Judge Alvah F. Potter of Lockport, New York and Frank Pierce Potter (b. 1842) of Chicago. Shortly afterward, the 1790 house was torn down and replaced with a twenty-six room, ornate summer residence, with accompanying sheds and barn. Although there may have been a farm manager, this marked the end of family farming on the property.



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Former residence at 171 Oak Hill Rd., photographed mid-20th century. *From Amsden, A Capital for New Hampshire, Chapter 13, opposite page 12.*



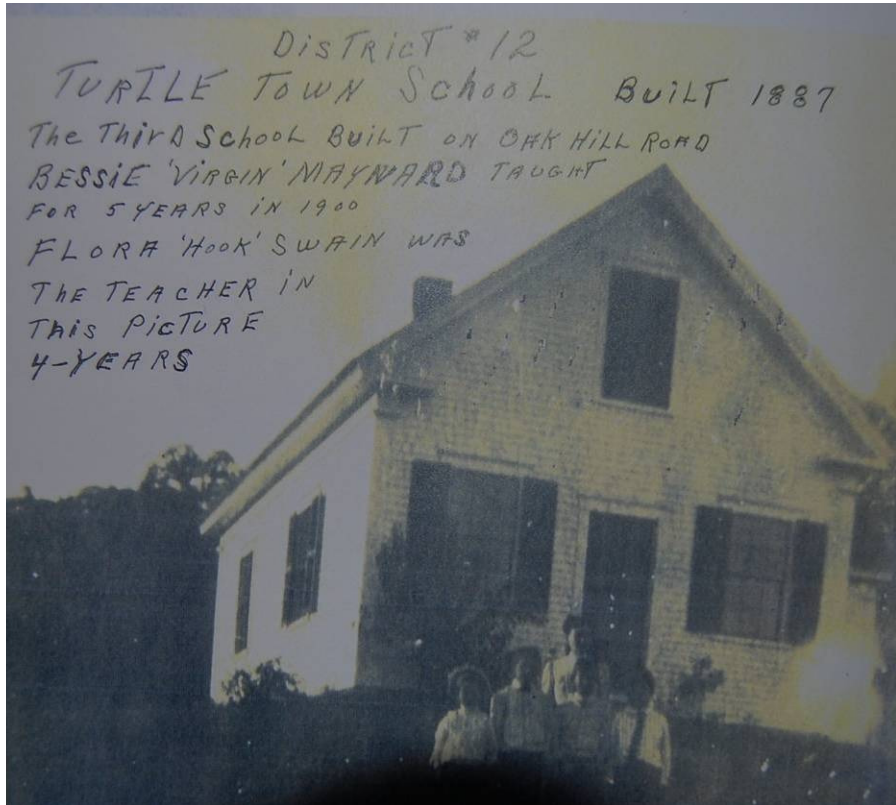
Summer house erected at 171 Oak Hill Rd. by F.P. Potter, ca. 1890. *Courtesy Regina Potter.*

That house burned in 1920. After the fire, the land remained unoccupied until Shirley “Pete” Potter and his wife and current owner, Regina, moved a shed that had accompanied the 1890 house slightly to the east renovated it into a house in 1952. Until 1997, a 19<sup>th</sup> c. barn stood west of the house; it was sold and moved to Salisbury. Although there are now no extant historic outbuildings on the property, the property, with its mature front yard trees, 61 acres on the north side of the road, as well as a large pasture overlooking Turtle Pond on the south that is leased for cow grazing, conveys its agricultural heritage.



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**185 Oak Hill Road:** This was built in 1887 as the District 15 School House. In 1902 it was known as the Turtle Town School.<sup>4</sup> It remained in use at least through the early 20<sup>th</sup> c., when it was sold and converted into a private residence. It is a 1 ½ story, 3-bay gable-front structure with clapboard siding, simple corner pilasters and cornice returns.



Turtle Town Schoolhouse, ca. 1900. *Courtesy Regina Potter.* [the photo was mislabeled: District 12 was in East Concord Village; District 15 was Turtle Town]

**197 Oak Hill Road:** see CON0181

**201 Oak Hill Road:** see CON0182

**207 Oak Hill Road:** One of a handful of farms in this area that was not built by a Potter, this was erected by Thompson Tenney in the 1850s on land purchased from the Potter family.<sup>5</sup> By 1893, the farm was 300 acres.<sup>6</sup> This is a 2 ½ story, 5-bay, Greek Revival farmhouse dating from the 1850s. Also on the property is a large, east-facing, gable-front barn that has been converted to residential and studio uses.

**251 Oak Hill Road:** see CON0183

**283 Oak Hill Road:** see CON0184

<sup>4</sup> 1902 City of Concord Engineer's Map; Bouton: 340; Lyford: 1223.

<sup>5</sup> In 1830, Thomas Potter sold 45 ½ acres to Nelson Tenney, who immediately sold it to Thompson Tenney. However, the land makes no mention of road frontage, so it is unlikely it was this house lot. [Potter family papers]

<sup>6</sup> Deed notes, Potter family papers.



**AREA FORM****AREA NAME:** OAK HILL AGRICULTURAL NEIGHBORHOOD**24. Statement of Integrity**

The Oak Hill Agricultural Neighborhood, with its late 18<sup>th</sup> - mid-19<sup>th</sup> farmhouses and accompanying agricultural outbuildings, as well as expansive agricultural landscape consisting of fields, pasture, woodlands, cellar holes, and stone walls, retains an exceptionally high degree of integrity of location, design, materials, setting, workmanship, feeling and association.

**27. Bibliography and/or References**

Amsden, Grace P., *A Capital for New Hampshire*. Unpublished manuscript in 3 vols., written between 1930 and 1960.

Bouton, Nathaniel, *The History of Concord*. Concord: Benning W. Sanborn, 1856.

*City of Concord Directories*, 1812 -1970.

Lyford, James O., ed., *History of Concord, NH*. Concord: Rumford Press, 1903, 2 vols.

Potter family papers. Private collection.

Sturrock, Carrie, "Two hundred years later; same family, same farm." *Concord Monitor*, 10/27/1998.

**Maps, Atlases, Plans and Views**

1858 *Map of Merrimack County*. Surveyed by H. E Walling, New York. Published by Smith and Peavey.

1892 *Town and County Atlas of the State of New Hampshire*. Compiled by D. H. Hurd and Co., Boston.

1902 *City of Concord Engineer's Map*

2006 *Aerial Maps*. City of Concord.

**28. Surveyor's Evaluation**

NR listed: district ☐

individuals ☐

within district ☐

Integrity: yes ☒

no ☐

NR eligible: ☐

district ☐

not eligible ☐

more info needed ☐

NR Criteria: A ☐

B ☐

C ☐

D ☐

E ☐

If this Area Form is for a Historic District: # of contributing resources: 10

# of noncontributing resources: approx. 10



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Date of photograph: Fall 2008

Negative stored at: NHDHR



Photo 1 description: 151 Oak Hill Road  
Roll: 7 Frame: 22 Direction: NW



Photo 2 description: 151 Oak Hill Road, showing barn  
Roll: 7 Frame: 24 Direction: NW



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Date of photograph: Fall 2008

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Photo 3 description: Turtle Town District Schoolhouse, 185 Oak Hill Road  
Roll: 4 Frame: 23 Direction: NE



Photo 4 description: Thompson Tenney Farmhouse, 207 Oak Hill Road  
Roll: 8 Frame: 4 Direction: N



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Date of photograph: Fall 2008

Negative stored at: NHDHR



Photo 5 description: Thompson Tenney barn, 207 Oak Hill Road

Roll: 8 Frame: 3 Direction: N